



UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20510

March 25, 2010

BARBARA A. MIKULSKI
MARYLAND

Ms. Brenda Donald, Secretary
Maryland Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3500

Dear Secretary Donald & Friends:

Greetings to the social workers and guests of the Maryland Department of Human Resources on the occasion of your celebration of Social Workers' Appreciation Month 2010. Thank you the kind invitation to share this uplifting event with all of my colleagues from the field of Social Work.

Friends, I know how hard you work securing the safety, permanence and well-being of Maryland's most vulnerable people. Day-in and day-out, with current budget restriction, no matter the hour of the day, you face difficult and even dangerous situations. With a clear mission to fight injustice, you bring solace, legal protections and real options to families, seniors and children. I can't thank you enough for all you do.

Let me just share with you a little of what I have been doing in the United States Senate – one of only two social workers there. First off, I have introduced *Rosa's Law*, a bill that will eliminate the terms "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded" from the federal law books. Last year, at a roundtable on special education, Nina Marcellino told me about her daughter, Rosa, who was labeled at her school some years ago as mentally retarded. She told me about the stigma, the pain, and the anguish it caused the entire family, but most of all Rosa herself.

That's why I introduced a law on behalf of this little girl and all of the children in the United States who are labeled, stigmatized and bear a burden the rest of their lives because of the language we use in the law books. My bill changes the phrase 'mentally retarded' to '*an individual with an intellectual disability*'. We did this in health, education and labor policy without in any way negatively impinging upon either the educational or other benefits that these children are entitled to.

I also introduced two social work bills, the *Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act* (S. 686), and the *Clinical Social Work Medicare Equity Act of 2009* (S. 687). These bills address the nationwide shortage of social workers and ensure clinical social workers are properly reimbursed under Medicare for the mental health services they provide. As a social worker, like you, I have been on the frontlines helping people cope with issues in their everyday lives. I started off fighting for abused children, making sure they were placed in safe homes. Today I am a social worker with power. I am proud to continue to fight every day for the long range needs of the nation on the floor of the United States Senate and as Chairwoman of the Aging Subcommittee of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Thank you for all you do every day for so many. Remember, everyone can make a difference, but together we can make change.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator